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Vice Admiral R. E. Libby
Deputy Chief of Naval Operations
(Plans and Policy)
Department of the Navy
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear Admiral Libby:

Thank you for your letter of 6 November enclosing the copy of the observations, comments and recommendations of the Commander in Chief, U. S. Naval Forces Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean concerning U. S. Policy in the Middle East.

I have read this paper with a great deal of interest and have also made it available to appropriate specialists on our staff here. I very much appreciate your bringing the document to my personal attention.

DIA, NAVY and DOS
review(s) completed.

Sincerely,

DOS concurs in release as redacted by
CIA.

Allen W. Dulles
Director

O/DCI/[]/rc/
19 November 1957
Orig. - Addressee

1 - DCI
1 - FMC
1 - Mr. [] w/basic
1 - ER
1 - Reading

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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IN REPLY REFER TO

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Ser 00693P61

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My dear Mr. Dulles:

The attached observations, comments and recommendations concerning U.S. Policy in the Middle East have been received by the Chief of Naval Operations from the Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean. They are highly pertinent to the situation which faces the U.S. today in the Middle East, and draw sharp attention to the fast moving events of the past year and the implications for the future.

In view of the timeliness of this document, the Chief of Naval Operations has directed that it be made available to you in the hope that it will prove of value in the current review of U.S. Policy toward the Middle East.

Yours sincerely,

R.E. Libby
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy
Deputy Chief of Naval
Operations (Plans and Policy)

Honorable Allen W. Dulles
Director, Central Intelligence Agency
2430 "E" Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Encl:

(1) Comments on Middle East Policy

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The aggregate of many signs leads to conclusion that since reaching a highwater mark following Egyptian hostilities of last Fall, the prestige and influence of US in Mideast has considerably diminished. Intervention of US to end the invasion of Egypt was widely acclaimed by Arab world. Subsequent enunciation of American Doctrine, given substantive meaning by Richards Mission and US Reaction to Jordanian crisis, was openly applauded by some govts of Mideast, and covertly favored by others, as a benevolent and protective action from the West. Subsequently BAGHDAD PACT was given needed encouragement by US participation in MIL CMTE.

Since June however developments centered around Syrian situation have reflected a deterioration of Western position, with initiative passing to Soviets and substantial gains registered in Communist penetration. In Arab eyes the threat, imaginary though it may be, of use of force by Turkey against an Arab country has far overshadowed any sense of danger from aggressive Communism. Arab popular sympathies have rallied to side of Syria and against the West. Even those leaders who are still inclined toward a pro-West alignment are under heavy pressures to break with West in favor of closer ties with Soviet bloc. As opposed to pursuing an affirmative integrated program in consultation and coordination with friendly Arab govts, the US has appeared to adopt the negative course of reacting to external stimuli, usually within limits selected by the opposition.

In searching for causes contributing to this unhappy state of affairs, one must start with basic factors influencing Arab thinking. Arab actions seem to stem primarily from these fundamental influences. First. A deep sense of frustration among enlightened leaders from belief that despite natural resources and centuries of labor their economic and sociological gains have not kept pace with other more fortunate areas of civilized world. Second. A lingering deep-seated distrust of Western powers, including Turkey, who in Arab minds symbolize colonialistic exploitation of human and material resources of Arab nations to own ends without return benefits. Third. All-consuming hatred of Jews and transcending fear that Israel, originally sponsored and now defended by Western powers, will further expand territorially at expense of Arab countries. On other hand, the Soviets, through clever propaganda and ready extension of MIL and economic aid, have succeeded in engendering among Arab masses and many Arab leaders a sense of gratitude and obligation toward Russia by convincing them that Russia is the true friend of the Arabs, that Russia treats Arabs with respect as equals, that Russia gives aid without any strings whatsoever, that it was the Soviet ultimatum that saved Egypt from conquest by Israel, France and UK, and that Russia is the champion of peace in MIDEAST.

So far western efforts apparently have not achieved broad favorable impact and popular appeal. Arabs have interpreted our actions as being in support of long range Western interests rather than toward fulfillment of short range Arab needs and aspirations. Members and potential members of BP are not yet convinced that US is willing to throw in its lot wholeheartedly and steadfastly with Arabs in defense of Mid East against aggression. Non-members are not attracted by a defense alliance aimed at Russia instead of Israel which is prime enemy of Arab. The torrent

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of Soviet propaganda through such outlets as Radio Cairo is not being effectively countered. Little progress has been made in convincing Arabs that threat of Soviet aggressive imperialism in MidEast is greater than threat of Israel.

On other side of ledger, there are now some encouraging signs that Arab leaders are beginning to feel Egypt and Syria have gone too far in embracing Soviet partnership. Examples are: Reported statements by Nasser in private to responsible officials that he is open to rapprochement with US; Declaration by Syrian govt that it will never become satellite, and intimations that visit by US Naval vessels to Latakia would be welcome, presumably to show impartiality; Despatch of Egyptian token force to Syria with most likely motive being to bolster Pan-Arabism and check Syrian drift into Soviet orbit; Efforts of Saud to maintain integrity of Arab world.

These and other signs appear to reflect a growing awareness among Arabs of extent and danger of Communist penetration in MidEast which perhaps could be exploited to offset distrust of US motives. Therefore believe time is ripe for a new US approach to safeguard independence of MidEast countries, prevent Soviets from gaining control this strategically vital area, and preserve availability of its natural resources and lines of communication to the West.

Without attempting to arrange items in proper chronological order, suggest following as essential elements of a plan for such a new approach:

A. Unequivocal guarantee by UK or by US-UK-France that no change in existing national boundaries by use of force will be permitted.

B. Renewed effort to solve Arab-Israeli problem, recognizing that resettlement of refugees and face saving compromise on armistice lines are necessary ingredients to any solution.

C. An integrated long range Aid Program in planning of which Arab govt would be invited to participate and which would be designed to have maximum timely showcase effect on Arab populations.

D. Immed construction radio broadcast facilities at strategic locations in MidEast for use in greatly intensified, carefully planned, propaganda campaign.

E. Guarded step by step carrot approach to Nasser with objective determining whether he could be alienated from Soviets in return for Western support. ("If you can't lick them join them" and Nasser probably better than any prospective replacement anyway)

F. Intensified efforts to bring about settlement of Algerian and Tunisian problems with subsequent fostering of Maghreb concept.

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G. After proper groundwork laid, inauguration of program of good will visits by SIXTYFIVE ships to Syrian and Egyptian ports. (Similar program for Yugoslavia and Albania should be considered)

With friendly benign position of US established in an improved political atmosphere, it should be possible to make progress toward a better defensive posture for region by following additional measures:

A. Phased establishment of US Command for MidEast along lines previously recommended, with adequate machinery for close coordination with Aid Program administration.

B. Development of MidEast Defenses along lines set forth in CINCPACOMME OPLAN 219-57.

C. Full US adherence to BP and assumption of leading role with objective of ultimate expansion of Pact to include all MidEast countries.

In all relations with Arab nations there should be careful attention given to prior consultation on policies and programs, with full measure of respect for dignity and co-equal status of sovereign nations. Furthermore, there should be close coordination and concerted action by US and UK.

While foregoing measures admittedly would be expensive and expose US to certain degree of blackmail and Arab penchant for playing both ends to middle, alternative is probably ultimate subjugation of MidEast to Soviet control with catastrophic effect on future security and economic welfare of free world. US cannot afford not to close this remaining gap in defensive perimeter around Russia. The strategic resources of MidEast must remain in friendly hands. Firmly believe that only through a new integrated long range affirmative program, skillfully planned and resolutely pursued--one which would give Arabs an increased voice in their own destiny and a proper role in the international forum--can the present unfavorable trend be reversed and the MidEast ultimately established as a secure stable peaceful area friendly to the West.

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